

**SWAC**  
**WASTE REDUCTION/RECYCLING SUBCOMMITTEE**  
**Friday, September 17, 2004 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

*Subcommittee Members Attending:*

Mark Hooper, Chair  
Robert Beckwith  
Shirley Shimada  
Carolyn Armanini

*Staff/Guests:*

Beth Humphreys  
Lauren Cole  
Jeff Gaisford  
Bill Reed  
Josh Marx

1. **Changes to Waste Acceptance Policy.** Lauren Cole, Division staff, gave an update on planned changes to the Division's policy for accepting electronics and mercury-containing products at disposal facilities. Beginning January 2, 2005, the Division will no longer accept certain electronic products and mercury-containing products.

Electronic products. Electronic products contain lead, mercury and other toxic materials. Proper recycling conserves resources and follows the state's waste management hierarchy to reuse or recycle materials before landfilling.

Currently, the Division doesn't accept any Hazardous/Dangerous Waste from commercial customers. We have specifically named computer monitors as a material we do not accept because it is frequently dangerous waste.

The electronic products we will no longer accept from either commercial or residential customers include: computer monitors and televisions, computers (including mainframe, desktop and laptop computers), and cell phones.

We are making these changes to make our acceptance policies more consistent with Snohomish County and the City of Seattle both of whom have banned disposal of these electronic products. Providing a consistent policy will help minimize confusion and simplify the recycling message.

Banning electronic products provides electronics recyclers with a steady flow of recyclable materials. Private sector recyclers, especially those in the Take it Back Network, have asked us to ban electronics so that they don't have to compete with the landfill for these resources.

There are 19 retail locations in King County that accept electronic products for recycling, many industry mailback programs, and 3 cell phone retail take back programs. We will provide brochures to customers at scale houses. We will also provide public notification prior to implementation of the ban by hanging posters at the stations, distributing fliers, posting information on the web site, and by mail. We will have a public and agency comment period related to changing our Waste Acceptance Rule.

Mercury Containing Products. Mercury is highly toxic and once released it circulates between air, water and soil, impacting fish and humans who consume fish. Mercury can affect the brain, spinal cord, kidneys and liver. It is especially dangerous to unborn babies and small children.

Currently, the Division doesn't accept any Hazardous/Dangerous Waste from commercial customers. We have specifically named Universal Waste Lamps (fluorescent and high intensity discharge lamps) as materials we do not accept. We have accepted "green tip" or low mercury lamps for disposal with a Waste Clearance if generators showed proof (test results or and MSDS) that the lamps passed TCLP tests for Dangerous Wastes.

The mercury products that the Division will no longer accept include: switches, thermometers, thermostats, mercury-added button batteries (watch, thermometer, hearing aids) and all fluorescent and high intensity discharge lamps from household generators. We will no longer accept "green tip" lamps from commercial customers.

The Division is making these changes to make our acceptance policies more consistent with Snohomish County and the City of Seattle both of whom have banned disposal of mercury containing products from their solid waste systems. We work on many joint projects with these jurisdictions and providing consistent policies helps minimize confusion and simplify the recycling message.

There are many local recycling options for fluorescent lamps from businesses. Household generated mercury-containing products can go to household hazardous waste collection facilities.

Public notification will happen at the same time as public notification on the electronics changes.

- 2. Electronics Update.** Beth Humphreys, Division staff, updated the subcommittee on the status of Division activities related to electronics recycling.

The Division has initiated an educational campaign to promote electronics recycling. The campaign features radio ads using Seahawk stars to educate the public about electronics recycling opportunities

Division staff have also been participating in a state stakeholder committee to develop recommendations for implementing and financing electronics recycling programs, as required by Substitute House Bill 2488, enacted in the last state legislative session. The recommendations will be presented to the state Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

- 3. Food Waste Collection Programs.** Beth Humphreys, Division staff, provided a status report on residential and commercial food recycling pilot programs in King County.

Commercial pilot food waste programs have been initiated in Redmond and Bellevue in partnership with the respective cities and their garbage haulers. The programs are designed to accommodate small-to-medium size food generators whose food waste can be picked up in 90-gallon carts. Participating businesses are provided with biodegradable liners for the carts.

The Division has also initiated a residential organics pilot collection program in unincorporated King County east of Redmond. The purpose of the program is to test the feasibility of providing a base level of organics (food, soiled paper, and yard waste) collection service as part of the basic service provided to all households in their garbage rate (like recycling). The program serves about 525 households. Customers that were not previously subscribing to yard waste service received a 34-gallon cart for recycling organics. The service is being provided at no charge for six months. Afterwards, all customers basic fee will include 34-gallon organics collection. Those customers wanting more capacity for organics (such as those people with a lot of yard waste ) may choose to pay extra for larger carts.

- 4. Recycling at Transfer Stations.** Josh Marx, Division staff, present options under consideration by the Division for changing recycling services at transfer stations. A summary of current services by station was passed out.

As new stations are upgraded, recycling areas will be extensive with both free and fee recycling. In the meantime, the Division is looking at what additional services can be provided in the short term given space and operational constraints. The following materials have been determined to be most feasible.

**Scrap metal** can be collected at Vashon and Enumclaw. At estimated 430 tons per year would be recycled from this expansion.

**Textiles** could potentially be collected in collection containers at six transfer stations: First Northeast, Enumclaw, Houghton, Cedar Falls, Vashon and Renton. Textiles would be collected by a non-profit agency selected through a request for proposal process. It would be a free service to the customers, with no cost to the Division for pickup. We estimate about 275 tons per year could be recycled through this program.